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LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR MURRAY ANNOUNCES \$14 MILLION TO IMPROVE PARKS IN 25 COMMUNITIES

BOSTON – Tuesday, January 17, 2012 – Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray today announced more than \$14 million in grants to enhance parks and recreational facilities in 25 communities throughout the Commonwealth.

“Parks are key resources that strengthen the fabric of communities across Massachusetts,” said Lieutenant Governor Murray. “By committing resources to our parks, our Administration and municipal partners are providing more recreational opportunities for people of all ages and effecting positive change in our neighborhoods and communities.”

The grants will fund projects in **Amherst, Barnstable, Boston, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Falmouth, Gloucester, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Medford, Northampton, Quincy, Revere, Salem, Somerville, Springfield, Westfield, Wilbraham, Woburn, and Worcester.**

“Public parks are essential to the health and economic wellbeing of our communities,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr. “Both of these programs have been key tools in helping revitalize our public spaces in communities across the Commonwealth.”

The grants announced today derive from two EEA initiatives – the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities program (PARC) and the Gateway Cities Parks Program, which is one of Governor Deval Patrick’s signature initiatives. Through these two programs alone, the Patrick-Murray Administration has invested more than \$72.9 million since 2007, resulting in the creation or restoration of 154 parks.

“I appreciate the administration’s commitment to providing recreational opportunities for people throughout the Commonwealth,” said Representative Anne Gobi. “I live in a rural area and take advantage on an almost daily basis of the parks and open space in my area, the people who live in urban areas deserve that same opportunity.”

“This PARC grant provides an exciting opportunity to improve Joyce Playground, which is a center of family and youth activity in our community,” said Representative Kevin Honan. “These significant improvements to the landscaping and play equipment will be greatly appreciated and enjoyed by our neighborhood residents.”

In addition to creating or restoring 154 urban parks, the Patrick-Murray Administration has protected more than 88,000 acres of land since 2007. Massachusetts now has nearly 1.3 million acres permanently protected – more acres than acres that have been developed.

“Governor Patrick and Lieutenant Governor Murray have continued to support urban parks and playgrounds, helping to maintain resources that are so important to our city’s children and families,” said Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino. “For many in Boston, the neighborhood park is their backyard. These improvements to Brighton’s Joyce Playground will ensure that the park continues to provide a wonderful outdoor gathering space to Brighton residents for many years to come.”

PARC Grant Awards:

- **Amherst -- Community Field Rehabilitation – \$208,320** for the installation of a pool liner, new concrete decking, fencing and lighting for safety, new drain lines and piping to fix significant water leaks, replacement of the filtration system and upgrades to the filter house, new benches, lifeguard chairs, shade structures, water fountains and improvements to the pool house.
- **Boston -- Joyce Playground – \$500,000** for the replacement of the existing water play feature, the addition of shade trees, renovation of the existing play lot equipment, the replacement of the fence and gates, renovation of the basketball court, the addition of benches and picnic tables and the installation of interpretive panels.
- **Chelsea -- Washington Park Redevelopment Project – \$500,000** for the introduction of active recreation opportunities to the site, additional seating and gathering areas throughout the park, a linear trellis, additional plantings, new walking paths, retaining wall repairs, lighting, an irrigation system and the addition of 4,500 square feet of open space.
- **Fall River -- Britland Park Project – \$500,000** for the construction of a watercraft launch area, entrance and parking areas, paths and picnic areas, interpretive signage and the installation of a synthetic turf field.
- **Falmouth -- Teaticket Park – \$500,000** for the acquisition of a 10.7 acre conservation restriction.
- **Gloucester -- Newell Stadium Field Turf Installation – \$500,000** for the installation of a synthetic, multi-purpose field and dedication of the 8.23 acres site as permanent parkland.
- **Lawrence -- Campagnone (North) Common Renovations – \$500,000** for the installation of a new play structure, a wide asphalt path around the play area, new plantings and benches and the renovation of two entry ways.
- **Lowell -- Concord River Greenway: Phase IIIA – \$500,000** for the construction of the last segment of a paved path along the Concord River from Centennial Island back to the east side of the river, continuing north to the end at the Rogers Street Bridge.
- **Medford -- Hormel Stadium Athletic Field - \$500,000** for the installation of new, high quality and well-draining soils, storm water management systems, high performance synthetic turf system and field markings.
- **Northampton -- Florence Recreation Fields – \$500,000** for the development of a new park that includes five multi-use fields, one 60-foot baseball diamond and one 90-foot baseball diamond, a parking lot, a multi-purpose path along the property, playground, pavilion, restrooms and a concession and storage building.
- **Revere -- Gibson Park Renovation Project – \$140,000** for the addition of two new tennis courts, resurfacing of two existing courts, addition of an ADA accessible ramp from the parking lot, installation of ADA compliant sidewalks, replacement of fencing around tennis courts, replacement of a baseball backstop and the addition of a half basketball court.
- **Salem -- Splaine Park – \$420,946** for the removal of overgrown vegetation, the construction of a stone dust bike/walking path along the park perimeter, the enhancement of the two main entrances, the construction of play structures, the installation of a new baseball field and irrigation system and rebuilding of the bleachers and dugouts.
- **Somerville -- 15-25 Cross Street East Park Construction – \$500,000** for the development of a new park that will include a social gathering space, play structures for older and younger children, a water play feature and a half-court basketball court.
- **Springfield -- Hubbard Park – \$500,000** for updates to the tennis and basketball courts, grading and drainage for the ball fields, new perimeter fencing, ADA accessible paths, a new parking lot and a new picnic grove.
- **Wilbraham -- Spec Pond Recreational Area Renovation Project – \$39,040** for the design of the Spec Pond Recreational Area.

- **Woburn -- Whispering Hill Woods – \$500,000** for the development of a new park that includes a multi-purpose natural turf field, a parking area and the restoration of an existing garage into a storage facility.
- **Worcester -- Elm Park Renovation – \$500,000** for the upgrade of current walkways to ADA standards, renovation of the playground, installation of new electrical service, pond edge improvements, upgrading of park lighting systems and the replacement of benches and picnic tables.

Gateway City Parks Program Grant Awards:

- **Barnstable -- Downtown Parks and Trails Plan – \$50,000** to develop a plan to connect existing parks and provide an expanded pedestrian network throughout Downtown Hyannis.
- **Everett -- Glendale Park Renovation – \$500,000** for the installation of a new synthetic field, athletic and pedestrian lights, irrigation and drainage systems, benches and trees, the rehabilitation of the walking paths, reconstruction of the entrance and tot lot.
- **Everett – Northern Strand Community Trail -- \$235,000** for the production of design and construction documents for the trail from the Malden line to Route 16 in Everett and a conceptual plan for the remainder of the path to the Everett-Chelsea line.
- **Fall River - Quequechan River Bike Trail - \$785,000** for the services of a surveyor, wetland scientist, landscape architect and civil engineer to produce design and construction documents for Phase II of the Quequechan River Path and a new 9,300 linear feet segment of shared use path that will connect downtown Fall River to the existing path along South Watuppa Pond.
- **Haverhill -- Swasey Park Renovation – \$1.1 million** for the first phase of renovations to a 14-acre park built for millworkers and their families over 100 years ago. When complete, the park will have a new accessible perimeter path, an attractive main entrance, a small accessible water spray park, new back stops, team benches, bleachers and infields at each baseball field and a new surface for the basketball court.
- **Holyoke -- Veterans Park Renovation – \$1.4 million** for the renovation of the existing park including the addition of handicap accessible ramps, new pavement, tree removal and pruning, tree planting, new lighting, fencing, trash receptacles and benches.
- **Leominster -- Monoosnoc Brook River Walk – \$500,000** for the construction of the first section of the Monoosnoc Brook River Walk from Central Street to Mechanic Street including sidewalks and walkways, lighting, fencing, site furnishings, signage, plantings and “state of the art” storm water treatment using bioretention areas.
- **Lynn -- Lynn Commons Rehabilitation – \$210,000** for the services of a surveyor, architect, landscape architect and civil engineer to produce construction documents for the rehabilitation of the historic Frederick Douglass Bandstand and immediate surroundings on Lynn Commons.
- **Quincy - Adams Green - \$1 million** for the design and construction documents necessary to build Adams Green, planned as a centerpiece of a reinvigorated Downtown Quincy. This planned park will be a new civic open space featuring a unifying town green and promenade.
- **Westfield -- Columbia River Greenway – \$1 million** for the city of Westfield to build a greenway along an abandoned rail line from the city’s border with the town of Southwick to the Little River, a distance of just over a mile. The greenway will also eventually connect to trails in Northampton, allowing travel along a substantial network of trails to the north as well.

The PARC program, formerly Urban Self-Help, was established in 1977 to assist cities and towns in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. PARC grants are offered on a competitive basis and reimburse communities between 52 and 70 percent of the total project cost, determined by the municipal demographics, with a maximum grant award of \$500,000.

Municipalities receiving PARC grants must have a current open space and recreation plan, an authorized parks and recreation commission and the land must be under parks commission jurisdiction and open to the public.

Grant applications are assessed based on criteria such as project quality and demographics, with preference given to park projects located close to urban centers and public transportation or serving environmental justice populations. These populations are defined as neighborhoods where the median annual household income is at or below 65 percent of the statewide median income or 25 percent or more of the residents are a minority, foreign born or lacking in English language proficiency.

The 17 PARC grants total more than \$7.3 million to help municipalities acquire parkland, renovate existing parks or build new parks and other outdoor recreation facilities.

Gateway City Parks is a flexible program, providing municipal officials with a menu of funding options for all phases of park development. 24 Massachusetts cities are eligible for the program, which targets communities with population greater than 35,000 and median household incomes and educational attainment levels below the state average. Funding can be used for activities and costs such as brownfield assessment and cleanup, park planning and recreational needs assessments – including the development of open space and recreation plans, activities that were not eligible for state parks funding prior to creation of the Gateway City Parks program.

Cities can also use the grants for acquisition, design and construction of parks, greenways and other recreational facilities. Funding for both grant programs comes from the Energy and Environment Bond Bill signed by Governor Patrick in August 2008.

The nine Gateway City Parks grants totaling \$6.8 million announced today will fund design and construction of parks of all types and sizes including sections of several inter-municipal trails